

## **Main Street Highways and Complete Streets Task Force Meeting**

August 15, 2011, 9:00 – 12:00 PM  
WSDOT's Large Commission Board Room  
310 Maple Park Ave SE, Olympia, WA 98504

### **DRAFT Meeting Summary**

#### **Attendance**

##### **Task Force Members in Attendance:**

Leonard Bauer, Washington State Department of Commerce, Growth Management Office  
Allyson Brooks, State Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
Dave Catterson, Association of Washington Cities  
Victor Colman, Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition  
Kirste Johnson, King County Public Health  
Doug Levy, Washington Recreation and Parks Association and cities of Everett, Kent, Federal Way, Renton, Puyallup, Redmond  
Paul Parker, Washington State Transportation Commission  
Lisa Quinn, Feet First  
Paula Reeves, WSDOT Highways and Local Programs  
Nicole Sanders, City of Snoqualmie  
Blake Trask, Bicycle Alliance of Washington

##### **Others Invited, but Unable to Attend:**

Cascade Bicycle Club  
City of Olympia  
City of Shoreline  
Transportation Choices Coalition

#### **Introduction**

WSDOT's Highways and Local Programs (H&LP) representative opened the meeting, thanked the attendees for traveling to the WSDOT Headquarters Building, and gave a brief overview of the Complete Streets Bill (ESHB 1071) and the budget proviso (ESHB 1175 Section 310) as follows:

"The department shall prepare a list of main street projects, consistent with chapter ... (Engrossed Substitute House Bill No. 1071), Laws of 2011, for approval in the 2013-2015 fiscal biennium. In order to ensure that any proposed list of projects is consistent with legislative intent, the department shall provide a report to the joint transportation committee by December 1, 2011. The report must identify the eligible segments of main streets highways, the department's proposed project selection and ranking method, criteria to be considered, and a plan for soliciting project proposals."

WSDOT H&LP representative explained that these two pieces of legislation were both passed last session and may have similar objectives.

#### **Task Force Discussion on Grant Program Development**

The following section is a summary of the discussion organized by topics as the Task Force addressed them. It is not a transcript, but an summary of the discussion intended to capture key points and agreements.

### ***Background on DAHP's Main Street Program***

Following the introduction, the Director of Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) provided some background on their Main Street Program <http://www.dahp.wa.gov/programs/mainstreet-program> and how the Complete Streets Bill, budget proviso (ESHB 1175 Section 310) and the DAHP Main Street Program can be complimentary and mutually supportive. The Task Force discussed the potential for giving some priority to grant applications that support DAHP's Main Street Communities. They asked WSDOT H&LP representative to add DAHP's Main Street Communities to the map of Main Street Highways.

### ***Nexus Between Main Street Highways and Complete Streets***

The Task Force discussed the nexus between Main Street Highways and Complete Streets. They agreed that the program should not be restricted to State Highways only. An example of the Sunset area in Renton was shared to demonstrate need on City streets. The group agreed they would like to see two sections contained in the report. The first section would discuss a grant program that meets the requirements of the budget proviso (ESHB 1175 Section 310) and the second section would discuss recommendations for a broader and improved program that would be consistent with both the Complete Streets Bill and the budget proviso, as well as new federal guidance on livable communities <http://www.dot.gov/affairs/2009/dot8009.htm>

### ***Including Unincorporated Areas in the Program***

WSDOT H&LP representative shared a request from Island County to include a section of State Route 20 as a Main Street Highway and asked the Task Force for their recommendations related to including unincorporated areas. They discussed the potential for including streets, roads, and highways inside Urban Growth Boundaries and Non-Municipal Urban Growth Areas. Washington State Transportation Commission's representative provided two other examples including Kingston and Packwood and suggested considering urbanized sections of streets and highways as a priority. After consideration, the Task Force agreed that urbanized sections of streets and highways in both incorporated and unincorporated areas should be eligible to apply for grant funding. They reaffirmed that this should be included in the second section of their report that addresses recommendations for a broader program and recognized that some rule-making may be required.

### ***Ensuring "Scale-ability"***

Both Association of Washington Cities (AWC) and DAHP Task Force members expressed support for grant selection criteria that was "scale-able", or inclusive of small communities, and cautioned against using high traffic volumes to identify or prioritize projects because many streets and roads with lower traffic volumes also have needs for these types of improvements. The City of Snoqualmie representative recommended that there be a menu of options or a variety of ways to meet the criteria for this grant program and explained that some smaller cities may take a different approach, but still meet the intent of the grant program.

### ***Considering Planning and Readiness to Proceed***

The Director of Department of Commerce, Growth Management Office recommended that some priority in grant selection be given to those communities that have developed plans including and supporting the project they are applying to fund. WSDOT H&LP representative shared that the RTPOs had made similar recommendations to ensure consistency with plans in 2010.

### ***Threshold Criteria for Grant Program Eligibility***

Washington Recreation and Parks Association and Puget Sound Cities representative felt it was important that grant applicants not be excluded or deemed in-eligible based on any one criteria and re-enforced support for a menu of options. The Task Force discussed the requirement in the Complete Streets Bill for grant applicants to adopt jurisdiction-wide Complete Streets ordinances in order to be eligible for funding. The Feet First Director expressed support for this requirement as it helps to ensure a consistent approach over time and through changes in elected officials. There was general agreement among the Task Force members that those applicants that had adopted Complete Streets ordinances or could demonstrate equivalent ordinances were in place should be eligible to apply for grants.

### ***Promoting Healthy and Active Communities***

King County Health and Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition representatives both expressed interest and support for criteria that addresses the goals outlined in the Complete Streets Bill, Section 2 -1 (a) through (d), specifically the goal of “Promoting healthy communities by encouraging walking, bicycling and using public transportation”. They asked WSDOT H&LP representative to develop preliminary ideas for how each of these goals would be measured and address in grant criteria for discussion by the Task Force.

### ***Annual Project Approval from the Legislature***

Department of Commerce, Growth Management Office Director asked about the approval process for these grant projects and suggested that successful grant applicants should have access to the funding as quickly as possible to allow coordination with their annual construction schedules. AWC and DAHP representatives agreed and suggested modeling this grant program after the Historic Courthouse Preservation Program <http://www.dahp.wa.gov/courthouse-preservation>, specifically the project approval process that does not require legislative approval and would allow communities to move to construction in the same year they received the grant award. The Bicycle Alliance of Washington representative suggested that the annual report required by the Complete Streets Bill could be used to ensure information flow to the Legislature and specifically the Transportation Committees without requiring project specific approval. DAHP’s Director pointed out that the Complete Streets grant program may include federal funding and could be subject to reporting consistent with the federal budget timeline.

### ***Considering Safety and Mobility Criteria in Grant Selection***

WSDOT’s H&LP representative asked if the Task Force thought that safety or mobility criteria should be evaluated in grant selection because these two areas had been a priority for WSDOT. Task Force members felt that often safety and mobility are the same for people biking, walking and taking transit, but not for motor vehicle users. They reaffirmed their recommendation that there be a menu of choices or various ways to meet the criteria for this grant, but in the case of safety and mobility, the intent of the Legislature in the Complete Streets Bill was to ensure safety and mobility across modes. The City of Snoqualmie representative agreed and explained that on the Main Street Highway in their community they do not have a large number of collisions, but still need a pedestrian activated signal to prevent collisions from occurring, so relying only on collision history to determine safety may not be the only approach. Washington Recreation and Parks Association and Puget Sound Cities representative gave the example of the competing modes of transportation on Lake Washington Boulevard and suggested that enhancing mobility for certain modes should be considered. Bicycle Alliance of Washington representative pointed out that there are a number of other funding sources for relieving congestion for motor vehicles and this program was meant to improve conditions for all users, especially for those walking, biking or taking transit.

### ***Reducing the Number of Miles Driven in Grant Selection***

WSDOT H&LP representative asked the Task Force if reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) should be considered in grant selection. The Task Force agreed that this could be an outcome or performance measure, but was not an appropriate criteria for grant selection.

### ***Match Requirement for Grant Applicants***

Several Task Force members raised the question of whether to recommend a match requirement for this program and expressed similar concerns about the challenge many communities will have meeting a match requirement in this economic climate. Department of Commerce, Growth Management Office Director shared that it has been their experience that grants with match tend to be implemented and completed sooner as communities have a vested interest in the project. The Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition representative suggested subordinating match in the evaluation of readiness to proceed, and viewing it as more of a bonus point vs. penalizing or making an application without match in-eligible. The Task Force agreed with this suggestion as a way to ensure community commitment without penalizing communities that cannot afford to match the projects, but still have significant need. The DAHP Director suggested that the Task Force consider including a recommendation in the report that match be considered by the Task Force in the future as the economic circumstances change and the grant program evolves.

### ***Are Planning Projects Eligible for Funding?***

The City of Snoqualmie representative raised the question of eligibility for planning projects. WSDOT H&LP representative shared that the 2010 recommendations were that projects include no more than 30% of individual project cost for community design that may include planning, project development, and public outreach. The Task Force agreed that 30% was too high, but asked WSDOT H&LP representative to identify the specific types of project elements that would be included in the 30%.

## **Task Force Discussion on WSDOT Consultation with Local Jurisdictions (required by Complete Streets Bill, Section 4)**

The Task Force reviewed the Complete Streets Bill, ESHB 1071, Section 4. The AWC representative asked WSDOT H&LP representative to provide definitions of “construction”, “re-construction”, and “major improvements”, and send the Task Force members a copy of WSDOT’s recently adopted Airport and Compatible Land-Use Program Guidebook <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/aviation/Planning/ACLUguide.htm> as an example of a consultation process that WSDOT endorses. The Task Force discussed the importance of the Complete Streets Bill in calling out WSDOT as the responsible party for consulting with local agencies in this case vs. local agencies having the responsibility to consult with WSDOT. They suggested that some type of guidance similar to the Airport consultation process be developed by WSDOT with broad involvement.

The Task Force discussed the range of projects impacted by this consultation requirement. They asked if Section 4 of the Complete Streets Bill applies to only projects funded through this grant program or if it applies more broadly to WSDOT construction and re-construction projects. They suggested getting clarification on legislative intent.

The Task Force agreed that local agencies need more flexibility in interpretation and application of design standards. Several Task Force members recommended that WSDOT conduct a training program for this program similar to the outreach and education that WSDOT has done in the past for federal Transportation Enhancement funding.

## **Meeting Follow Up Requested by Task Force**

- Map of DAHP Main Street Communities combined with Main Street Highways
- Preliminary draft of performance measures and criteria addressing the four goals outlined in the Complete Streets Bill (ESHB 1071)
- Specific types of project elements that may be included in a 30% maximum per project cost for project development or community design.
- Definitions of “construction”, “re-construction”, and “major improvements”
- WSDOT’s recently adopted Airport and Compatible Land-Use Program Guidebook: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/aviation/Planning/ACLUguide.htm>
- Clarification on legislative intent of Section 4 of the Complete Streets Bill (ESHB 1071) in terms of which WSDOT projects would be subject to these requirements.

## **Closing Comments – Next Meeting**

WSDOT H&LP representative thanked Task Force members for attending and encouraged them all to attend the next meeting on **September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2011**. Additional information will be sent out via email soon. Meeting notes and other information will be posted on WSDOT’s website:

<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/LocalPrograms/Planning/MainStreets.htm>